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A description of the Regional English Language Center (RELC) and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), which governs RELC and other educational projects either in operation or in advanced stages of planning, is presented. (Founding members of the Organization are Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and the Republic of Vietnam.) RELC, in operation since July 1968, is located in Singapore, and is funded from four main sources--the U.S. Government (AID, State, and USIA); the Singapore Government, the British Government (British Council); and some self support from RELC. The Center's main functions will include conducting training courses for key personnel; collecting and disseminating information on training facilities related to English teaching; assisting and strengthening programs and facilities in English teaching in member states; acting as a central agency for the exchange of personnel; conducting and promoting research; and providing professional administrative support to scholars from within and outside the region. Concluding the report is a description and evaluation of TEP (Teacher Education Program), a self-instructional teacher-training course developed for AID by English Language Services (a division of Washington Educational Research Associates). (AMM)

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SELECTED TESOL DEVELOPMENTS IN A.I.D.'S ASSISTANCE TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

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To understand the Regional English Language Center (RELC), it is necessary to know something about the organization which called the Center into existence. The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) is an organization established by the governments of Southeast Asian countries to promote regional ccoperation in education. The Organization possesses full juridical personality, and enjoys in the territory of each of its member states such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the fulfilment of its purposes. The founding members of the Organization, who are signatories to the Charter of the Organization, are Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and the Republic of Vietnam.

The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Council (SEAMEC) is the policy-making body of the Organization. Its members are the Ministers of Education of the member states of the Organization. The Council meets at least once a year.

The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Secretariat (SEAMES) located in Bangkok, is the executive arm of the Organization. Its staff, headed by the Director, are nationals of member states but they are responsible solely to the Organization. The Secretariat's main function is to implement the policies and execute the programs approved by the Council.

Projects of the Organization which are either in operation or in an advanced stage of planning (up to December, 1968) include: the Regional

English Language Center (Singapore); the Regional Center for Education in Science and Mathematics (Penang); the Central Coordinating Board for Tropical Medicine (Bangkok); the Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Los Banos); the Regional Center for Training, Research and Post-graduate Study in Tropical Biology (Bogor); and the Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (Republic of Vietnam).

The Regional English Language Center has been in operation since 1st July 1968. It is located at 104, Watten Estate, Singapore, 11. The Center is housed temporarily in a large bungalow with spacious grounds pending the construction of its own permanent building in Orange Grove Road, Singapore, 9, which is expected to be ready for occupation by 1 July 1970.

The Interim RELC is funded from four main sources: the United States Government provides the main financial support (A.I.D., State and USIA); the Singapore Government provides the building, maintenance, utilities and some staff; other member states of the Organization contribute to the project by continuing to pay the home salaries of their officers who attend training courses at the Center; the British Government through the British Council contributes professional staff, library books and audio-visual equipment. Some self support will be realized from the RELC building itself.

The 18-story RELC building, with a total floor area of 214,000 square feet, will comprise:

Ground Floor	Main Lobby, International House Lobby, Auditorium, Ministers' Room, Conference Registration, Conference Secretariat.
1st Floor	Two Conference Rooms, 7 Conference Delegation Rooms, Consultant Rooms, Students' Lounge, Exhibition Hall, Restaurant, Cafeteria.
2nd - 5th Floors	RELC offices for Director, Registrar, Bursar, general office, lecture rooms, common rooms, staff rooms, language laboratories, audio-visual aid rooms, committee rooms, library.
6th - 13th Floors	128 double bedrooms for scholars, fellows, visiting educators, conference participants.
14th - 17th Floors	16 apartments for staff and visitors with families.

The building will be centrally air-conditioned up to the 13th floor. The remaining apartment floors will be air-conditioned with room units. As of December, 1968, the preliminary architectural and engineering survey was completed, planning approval obtained, and the site cleared. Piling was expected to commence in January, 1969. The building is expected to be ready

by 1st July 1970.

The Interim RELC is staffed by a Director, a Registrar, a Bursar, Research Assistants and supporting staff from Singapore; two professionals and one administrative staff member from the United States; two professional staff members from the United Kingdom and one Librarian from Malaysia.

In 1963, the Interim RELC carried out two major programs. The first 4-month intensive training course in the teaching of English as a second or foreign language was conducted for 18 officers from SEAMEC countries who hold key positions in university teaching, teacher training and educational administration. A research program was also carried out with the assistance of the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to evaluate the Teacher Education Program (TEP) and adapt it for use in Southeast Asia.

The RELC will have the following main functions: (a) to conduct training courses for teacher-educators, supervisors/inspectors and other key personnel concerned with the teaching of English in member states; (b) to collect, produce and distribute instructional materials related to the teaching of English; (c) to collect and disseminate information on training facilities related to the teaching of English within the region; (d) to assist and strengthen programs and facilities in English teaching in member states by the provision of consultant and advisory services and financial assistance; (e) to act as a central agency for, and, in appropriate cases, to arrange or to assist financially, the exchange of personnel between member states; (f) to conduct and promote research and disseminate the results for the benefit of member states; (g) to provide professional and administrative support to scholars from within and outside the region.

The RELC's training courses will cater for 520 student-months a year.

During the two years at the interim Center (1968-70) and the first five years at the permanent Center (1970-75) the RELC aims to:

Train 544 key educators concerned with English teaching from the seven member states;

Conduct 10-12 major applied research projects at the Center and within member states;

Train 28-30 research fellows from member states;

Provide various consultant services to member states;

Provide a library loan service and publish a bi-annual bulletin and quarterly newsletter;

Arrange 28-30 professional personnel exchanges;

Provide administrative and professional support to scholars within and outside the region;

Conduct 12-14 professional seminars, workshops and conferences;

Develop and produce standardized diagnostic and achievement tests in English;

Develop and produce language laboratory programs and other self-instructional materials;

Stimulate the preparation and production of suitable instructional materials for English teaching in the region.

The Regional English Language Center is designed to improve the teaching of English as a second or foreign language in SEAMEC member states by developing programs in training, applied research and instructional materials. In responding to each country's varied needs, the Center's approach is problem-oriented. The programs offered do not duplicate existing national programs, nor do they usurp functions that are normally the responsibilities of the member states. The programs are aimed at supporting and strengthening national efforts and at pioneering new approaches in teaching English as a second or foreign language. Flexibility of approach and regular evaluation of the activities of the Center will ensure that its programs remain adapted to the changing needs of member states.

One of the first activities undertaken by the RELC was cooperation with the American Institutes for Research to evaluate the overseas effectiveness of a self-instructional teacher training course which had been developed for AID by English Language Services, Inc. now a Division of Washington Educational Research Associates.

The course includes instruction on phonology, grammar, language learning theory, classroom techniques, and general methodology for language teaching. A special feature of the course is the use of films of student groups to provide the teacher-trainee with practice teaching experience.

This course is geared to a twelve-week training program and utilizes a teaching machine console. The console consists of a fiber glass geodesic dome and table. The dome, which is sprayed on the inside with acoustical foam, acts as a parabolic reflector for sound. Speakers mounted at the edges can be used instead of earphones when desired. The dome also serves as a shield against the light, an important factor because each console has a rear screen 8mm sound movie projector in it, producing a picture about the size produced by an average portable television set. A cassette tape recorder is included with each station.

The lessons are presented in 26 volumes of textbook material, 163 cartridges of continuous loop training film, and 140 cartridges of prerecorded instructional tape. The content of the courses is the result of several years of planning and research by a committee of experts in the fields of language learning theory, general linguistics, and teaching English as a foreign language.

Procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of the program were prepared by the American Institutes for Research in Pittsburgh, under an A.I.D. contract. The research design includes pre and post-tests for the trainees; hourly observation of each trainee; progress checks to ascertain the trainee's success in taking instructions from the machines; and program revisions as necessary to achieve the teaching objectives.

From February through November 1968, the RELC research staff conducted a tryout of the Teacher Education Program (TEP). Seventeen Singapore teachers and one teacher from Laos have taken the course at the RELC. They have been

tested, observed and questioned under controlled conditions in order to find out just how effective TEP is. Each SEAMEC country has sent a visiting research assistant to work for three or four months with the RELC staff on the evaluation, and to learn about TEP.

A seminar was held at the RELC from 31 October to 2 November to discuss the results of the tryout, and to make recommendations as to what the next steps in the utilization of TEP should be. Two delegates from each SEAMEC member country attended the seminar. The delegates included the visiting research assistants who had worked on the tryout, as well as the Coordinating Committee member or other representative from each Ministry of Education. Also included were advisors and observers from USAID, the British Council, American Institutes for Research, the Singapore Ministry of Education, Singapore Educational Television, and the RELC Staff.

The first day of the seminar was devoted to reports on the tryouts by the RELC staff and the visiting research assistants. The effectiveness of TEP was considered in terms of its applicability in each SEAMEC country.

The second day of the Seminar was spent in discussion, and drafting of recommendations. All countries expressed interest in experimenting further with TEP, and several countries could see possibilities for implementing the course. On the other hand, none of the countries was completely satisfied with TEP, and numerous suggestions for possible improvements were made. The specific recommendations of the Seminar were as follows:

1. The RELC staff should prepare a proposal describing long range RELC plans for major revisions of TEP. The methodology and grammar sections were specifically mentioned as areas for this type of revision. The proposal should be submitted to the RELC Coordinating Committee for approval. A specific problem to which TEP is being applied would have to be identified and the details of TEP utilization would have to be spelled out, indicating equipment and staff requirements.
2. The RELC staff should begin revisions of the TEP phonology section based on available references on phonological descriptions of languages of member countries, and such other information on predictable pronunciation difficulties as may be provided by research counterparts and available course members. Drafts of the revisions were to be submitted to member countries for comments.
3. Member countries interested in utilizing TEP should prepare proposals for its use, including external assistance required, and submit them to RELC.

The tryouts in Singapore began in February of last year and continued at intervals until the end of December. The group of teachers participating in the evaluation consisted of six primary school teachers, three men and three women with varied backgrounds.

I think one may wonder why the seminar report indicated that there was not complete satisfaction with the TEP. Let me read a few quotations from Dr. Horst's report at the Seminar:

1. "While taking TEP the trainees knew that the Ministry of Education was not going to test them on the material, so there was little compulsion to master it."
2. "On their return to the classroom they were understandably reluctant to make sweeping changes in their teaching techniques - changes that might not meet the approval of their principals and inspectors."
3. "TEP drills trainees on various skills: phonology, grammar, presentation of oral drills, reading drills, etc. Then TEP tries to show trainees how to organize their teaching, making use of the skills. TEP does not give demonstrations of complete class periods that show what a teacher should do each day from the time a class period begins until it ends...It is my impression that the step by step demonstration is what the trainees expected and wanted. This is supported by comments of all the teachers to the effect that Phonology and Transformational Grammar were not useful because they are not appropriate subjects for primary school students. Even though the trainees had been told repeatedly by TEP and by the research staff that these sections were for the teacher's benefit, they could not overcome the idea that they were supposed to imitate in their classrooms everything they saw in TEP."

4. "TEP shows classes of four adults. The trainees have classes of forty children. The trainees feel that TEP should show them how to deal with the special problems that large classes of children create."
5. "When questioned, several teachers said that they felt at a loss with TEP techniques because there was no one to turn to for help or suggestions. If they were not clear about any part of the TEP method by the end of the course, then their only choice was to leave it out of their classroom teaching."

On the positive side of the ledger we should report the following conclusions in AIR's report covering the first tryout:

1. The electronic and mechanical components of TEP proved serviceable and effective.
2. At each site, the AIR Supervisor assigned to the project and the local techniques were entirely capable of meeting the maintenance needs of the equipment, and the services of a U.S. technician were not necessary.
3. The trainees developed great facility in using the equipment and in following the self-instructional procedures and they were able to progress through the course with little outside assistance.
4. Trainees did not complain about working at the consoles for three to four hours at a time.
5. The trainees in Singapore who were observed in the classroom were not putting the TEP techniques into practice. On the other hand, the Caracas Supervisor reported that the three

teachers taking selected portions of TEP were much more enthusiastic about using TEP than were the regular trainess who were still students.

6. Overall, it appears that the recurrent costs of TEP can be lower than the costs of live courses.

The American Institutes for Research will present to AID in June 1969 a final evaluation report on the TEP overseas tryouts. The report will include not only the tryouts in Singapore but those conducted at the Central Institute of English, Hyderabad, India, and at the Instituto Pedagogico, Caracas, Venezuela. Additional tryouts of the TEP at the Center for English Language Research and Teaching, American University of Beirut, Lebanon, will be the subject of a separate report. The Beirut report is expected in February, 1970.